

Assembly Bill No. 1846

Passed the Assembly May 31, 2000

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

Passed the Senate August 30, 2000

Secretary of the Senate

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2000, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

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CHAPTER _____

An act to add a heading as Article 1 (commencing with Section 9100) to, and to add Article 2 (commencing with Section 9115) to, Chapter 2 of Division 8.5 of, and to add Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 9450) to Division 8.5 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to aging.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1846, Lowenthal. Senior housing.

Existing law contains various provisions that require building standards and accessibility guidelines to ensure that public buildings and accommodations are open and available to persons with disabilities.

Existing law requires the California Department of Aging, among other things, to administer the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act which establishes various programs that serve older individuals, including aging information and education programs.

This bill would establish the Senior Housing Information and Support Center within the department, for the purpose of providing information and training relating to specified subjects, including housing options and home modification alternatives designed to support independent living, and available innovative resources and senior services.

This bill would also require the department, in consultation with the California Commission on Aging, to enter into a contract with an entity for the development of information and materials relating to the concept of “aging in place” and the benefits of home modification for seniors.

This bill would require the department to distribute these materials to area agencies on aging and other appropriate entities.

This bill would provide that implementation of the bill would be subject to appropriations contained in the Budget Act.



The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. A heading is added as Article 1 (commencing with Section 9100) to Chapter 2 of Division 8.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 1. General Provisions

SEC. 2. Article 2 (commencing with Section 9115) is added to Chapter 2 of Division 8.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 2. Senior Housing Information and Support
Center

9115. There is in the California Department of Aging the Senior Housing Information and Support Center, which shall have the following functions:

(a) The center shall serve as a clearinghouse for information for seniors and their families regarding available innovative resources and senior services.

(b) (1) The center shall provide information or contract with another entity to provide information concerning housing options and home modification alternatives, to enable seniors to live independently or with their families as often as possible.

(2) The center shall distribute this information to each area agency on aging and to other appropriate entities throughout the state.

(c) The center shall promote education and training for professionals who work directly with seniors in order to maximize opportunities for independent living.

9116. The Director of the California Department of Aging shall appoint all necessary staff to carry out the provisions of this article.

9117. Implementation of this article shall be subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act.

SEC. 3. Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 9450) is added to Division 8.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:



CHAPTER 4.5. HOME MODIFICATIONS FOR SENIORS

9450. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Thousands of California seniors are living with mobility and health problems and these numbers will increase as the state's population ages. Statistics show that 50 percent of people over the age of 80 years are disabled in some manner.

(2) Most housing was not designed for people who are disabled, have lost strength, flexibility, or balance through aging, and who necessarily have become fearful or extremely cautious in their daily activities to avoid injury. Front steps, staircases, narrow doorways, low electric sockets, low light levels, round door handles, high kitchen cabinets, and bathrooms without grab bars or moveable shower heads pose hazards for the elderly. One in three Americans over the age of 65 years suffers a fall each year, often in the home, which can cause serious injury and depression.

(3) Studies show that basic home modifications to improve safety and make it easier to maneuver about the home can forestall hospitalization and nursing home care as seniors grow more fragile. "Aging in place" is a new concept that can result in less injury, retaining elders in their homes, and offers a significant cost savings to health care insurers, families, and public agencies.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the development of the "aging in place" concept be recognized and supported by the state, that funding for education and making home improvements be facilitated through public and private sources, and that recommendations for changes in home modification policies and information for home modification projects and products be developed.

9451. The department, in consultation with the commission, shall enter into a contract for the development of information and materials which shall be used to educate Californians on the concept of "aging in place" and the benefits of home modification. The

contractor shall be a research-based university gerontology department with extensive experience and work with the concept of “aging in place” and the benefits of home modification.

9452. The department shall distribute the information developed pursuant to Section 9451 to each area agency on aging and to other appropriate entities throughout the state.

9453. The department, in cooperation with the entity contracting with the department pursuant to Section 9451, shall sponsor regional training sessions, and seminars, using the materials developed pursuant to this chapter.

9454. Implementation of this chapter shall be subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act.

Approved _____, 2000

Governor

